

# CHANDAMAMA

JANUARY 1977

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# CHANDAMAMA

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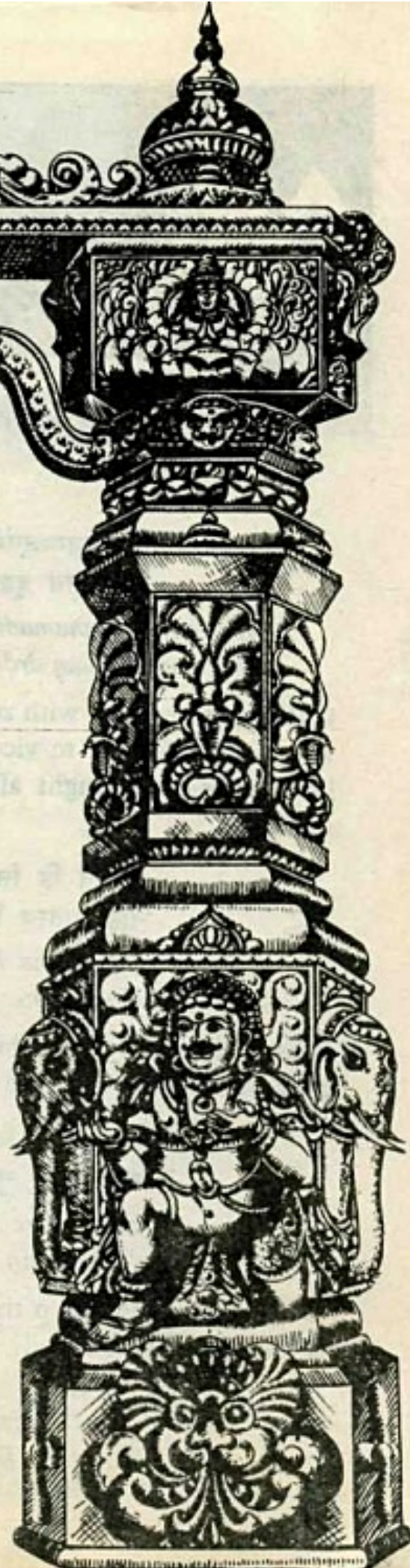
## INTO THE NEW YEAR—WITH QUEST

"When and why did January become the first month of the year?" a young man appearing for a competitive examination was asked.

"We count the years as either B.C. (Before Christ) or A.D. (anno Domini, in the year of the Lord); hence the beginning of the year must have something to do with Christ. But I am afraid, I am wrong," answered the candidate apologetically.

He was no doubt wrong, and he had the good sense to say so. It was in the year 153 B.C. that the Romans introduced a new calendar with January as the first month of the year. Prior to that the year began with March. The name January is derived from an ancient Roman God, Janus. He was worshipped at the beginning of an enterprise or an adventure. No wonder that the first month of the year should bear his name.

Although it is in fitness of things to discuss about January in the January number of your magazine, let us go back to the aforesaid young man and others like him one of whom declared that Tibet was the name of a mountain and yet another who said that Trivandrum was in Assam. Well, one who believed Tibet to be a mountain can certainly prove himself an honest magistrate and the other who was not well informed about the situation of Trivandrum at the moment can be an efficient superintendent of police, if given the chance. Yet, to know is good. Why not take advantage of the new section in your magazine (see this issue) and ask an important question for an answer from Chandamama which may be helpful to you as well as the other readers?







## GOLDEN WORDS OF YORE

उत्साहसम्पन्नमदीर्घसूत्रं क्रियाविधिज्ञं व्यसनेष्वसक्तम् ।

शूरं कृतज्ञं वृद्धसौहृदं च लक्ष्मीः स्वयं मार्गति वासहेतोः ॥

*Utsāhasampannamadīrghasūtram kriyābidhijñam vyasaneṣvasaktam*

*Śūram kṛtajñam dṛḍhasouhṛdam ka lakṣmīḥ svayam mārgati vāsahetoḥ*

One who perseveres with zeal and is never lazy, who knows how to act properly, who is not addicted to vices, who is courageous and grateful and is faithful to his friends — is sought after by Goddess Lakshmi (Goddess of Wealth) for residence.

*The Panchatantra*

उद्यमेन हि सिध्यन्ति कार्याणि न मनोरथैः ।

नहि सुप्तस्य सिंहस्य प्रविशन्ति मुखे मृगाः ॥

*Udyamena hi sidhyanti kāryāṇi na manorathaiḥ*

*Nahi suptasya siṃhasya praviśanti mukhe mṛgāḥ*

What is necessary for achieving a goal is effort; mere desire does not help. No prey will enter the mouth of a sleeping lion.

*The Panchatantra*

कोऽतिभारः समर्थानां किं दूरं व्यवसायिनाम् ।

को विदेशः सुविद्यानां कः परः प्रियवादिनाम् ॥

*Ko'tibhāraḥ samarthānām kim dūram vyavasāyinām*

*Ko videśaḥ suvidyānām kaḥ paraḥ priyavādinām*

What is burdensome to the able? What is distance to a merchant? Which land is foreign to the learned? Who can be a stranger to a man of sweet speech?

*Chanakya*





STORY OF INDIA — I

# RURU AND PRAMODVARA

A great civilisation flourished in India thousands of years ago. Upon the banks of the rivers like the Sindhu and the Saraswati, people lived a lofty life, passing their days in communion with Nature and the gods.

Among them were great rishis who composed the Vedas, the world's earliest works of wisdom. They aspired for happy and long life and meditated on the mysteries of birth, death and the aim of life. Great, indeed, was their quest.

The story of Ruru tells us much about the brave and noble spirit of the youth of that age.



Ruru was the son of a rishi and Pramodvara was the daughter of a Gandharva, brought up by a rishi. They played in the forest and beside the brooks. All around them there were joy and freedom.





When they grew up, it was decided that they should marry. On the eve of their marriage, Ruru roamed about in the jungle gathering flowers for Pramodvara. She looked on happily as he was seen returning.

Suddenly she was bitten by a snake. Ruru was surprised to see her sweet smile changing into a painful look. She fell down as he rushed to her side. The terrible snake hissed and wriggled away.



Pramodvara was still alive when Ruru took her into his embrace. He called her fondly as if to stop her from leaving the earth. She responded and her eyes showed how surprised and anguished she was at this sudden disaster. But her voice grew feeble and she closed her eyes.



The women of the hamlet of the rishis came and took away Pramodvara's dead-body. Ruru sat dazed for a long time, alone. He was too shocked even to weep.

What is this death which deprived him of his dear Pramodvara? He wondered.



For days together Ruru roamed about in the forest, outwardly silent but inwardly furious against the cruel destiny. Nobody dared to console him. Even the gods became afraid of him lest he should burst out with some curse against them.

At last Madana, the God of Love, appeared before him. Love and Death were antagonists and Madana was happy to meet a young man who had the strength and determination to confront the God of Death. He told Ruru how to enter the nether-world where the departed souls dwelt.







Ruru entered the nether-world. It was guarded by fearful beings. But he defied them with his valour. After several ordeals he found his way to the presence of Yama, the God of Death.

But the God of Death would be pleased neither with prayer nor with any offering. Pramodvara could live again only if Ruru would sacrifice half of his own life for her sake. Ruru did not hesitate for a moment. He flung half of his life at Yama.



And next moment he found himself on the earth again, beside Pramodvara, as if both had woken up from a sleep!

Their marriage was soon solemnised with so many rishis blessing them.





## THREE BOONS IN ONE

Long ago, in the far north of India, there was a very kind and innocent king. Taking advantage of his goodness his wicked minister, with the help of some of the courtiers and aided by another king of the neighbourhood one day besieged his palace, threw him and his queen into the jail and usurped the throne. The young prince narrowly escaped into the nearby forest.

He ran and ran through the wood and stopped only when it was evening. He sat down under a big mango tree, too tired to walk any more and gasping for breath.

There came a wave of breeze

and at once a few ripe mangoes fell on the prince's lap. The prince looked up and said, "I thank you very much, O good tree, for giving me your fruits. I was very hungry indeed."

A little dove hopped down to a lower branch and cooed, as though to acknowledge the receipt of the thanks, on behalf of the tree.

The prince ate the mangoes which were as sweet as nectar. He then relaxed, leaning against the tree. A moment later a gang of rowdy fellows arrived there. They climbed the tree and plucked the ripe as well as the unripe mangoes. While they ate the ripe mangoes, they



threw away the unripe ones. They broke and scattered the branches just for fun. The little dove flew away and circled overhead, shrieking, afraid that its nest might be destroyed by the fellows.

"Why do you plunder the tree in thus manner? What use plucking all the fruits? Don't you see that many of them are unripe? And what business have you to break the branches? Don't you see that birds rest on them?" protested the prince.

"See, see and see! As if you alone have eyes and we don't have any!" ranted one of the rowdies.

"Audacity! He teaches us how to see! Now that we have plucked all the mangoes, let us pluck out his eyes. He has already seen too much for his age. He need not see anything more for the rest of his life," said the leader of the gang, goggling his hyena-like eyes.

And they took hold of the prince and while he struggled to free himself, they plucked his eyes out and then left the place.

The prince cried in pain. But soon he heard a most soothing voice, "Do not grieve, O sweet prince. Know that this is one of the rare magic trees. At night it can fly anywhere it







likes. Now it is already dark enough for it to take off. We will take you to the goddess Kali who dwells on a mountain in a far away region. You ask the goddess for the boon of a pair of new eyes and I am sure they will be granted to you."

"But who are you?" asked the prince.

"I am the dove you had seen. The tree and myself are grateful to you for your efforts at resisting those rowdy fellows. Naturally, we are most eager to help you. We will see that you get back your eyes. Now cling on to the trunk," said the dove.

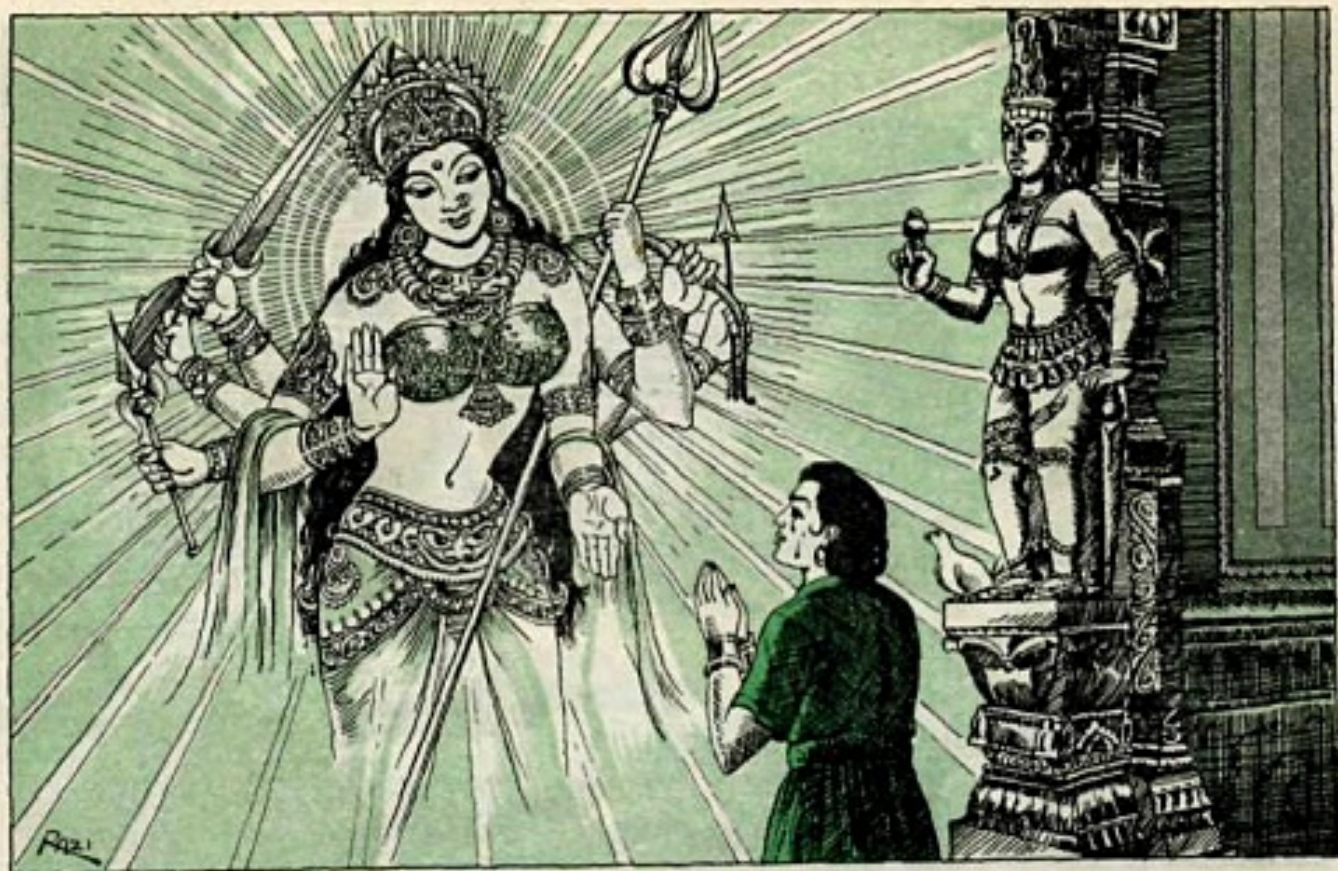
The prince did as the bird

said and soon the tree rose high into the clouds. "Rejoice, O prince, rejoice, for in a short while you will get back your vision," said the bird joyfully. But the prince only sighed.

"Why do you sigh, O prince? Don't you believe me? Be sure, the compassionate goddess will give you a new pair of eyes. She always grants a devotee any one boon, though not more," said the bird again.

"In that case, sweet bird, I will rather ask for the freedom of my parents who are rotting inside the enemy's jail and not for my eyes," said the prince and he narrated to the bird all





their misfortunes. The bird heard everything with attention and mumbled, "It is a pity that we can obtain only one boon from the goddess. You have to choose from your parents' freedom, your own eyes, and the recovery of the kingdom."

"I don't care for the kingdom," said the prince, "I must decide between securing my parents' release and getting a pair of eyes for myself. And my choice is for the first."

"Wait, wait, I have a wonderful idea," exclaimed the bird and whispered his advice to the prince as the tree began to descend on the mountain of the

goddess Kali.

The bird led the eyeless prince to the presence of the deity inside the temple. "In a sense it is good that you cannot see anything. There are no human beings here. All the shrieks and noises you hear are from a variety of imps, gnomes and goblins. They would not have pleased your eyes at all!"

But soon they entered a chamber which was perfectly immune to any sound. The bird taught the prince a hymn and asked him to repeat it for three hundred and thirtythree times. As soon as he had done it, he heard a sublime voice, "My



son, I am pleased with you. You can ask me for a boon—but only one boon.”

“Thank you, O Goddess,” said the prince prompted by the bird, “Grant that flanked by my parents, I should be able to see from the roof of my palace, looking over my kingdom, your blessed temple here!”

“It is granted,” said the voice. Bowing down to the deity, the prince came out and sat on the tree, guided by the bird. And as the tree rose high, he could soon see the twinkling stars and a bright moon. He had got back his vision. In an hour the tree came down and took root again.

And before long, his father’s soldiers came and found him out. The people of the kingdom had rises in rebellion

against the usurpers and had routed them and had restored the throne to the old king. The prince led the army against the neighbouring king who had helped the usurpers and defeated him and annexed his kingdom to theirs. By doing so he extended his domain upto the temple of Kali. Flanked by his happy parents he could now look over his kingdom and was able to see the deity’s temple on the horizon. Thus the single boon he received from the goddess proved in fact to equal three boons.

The dove often flew into the prince’s garden and gave him many useful advices. People believed that it was at the dove’s instance that the prince married the most beautiful girl in the world, some years later.







## THE CANNIBAL'S LAUGHTER

Long ago Caliph Ahmiad was the ruler of Bagdad. He nursed an ambition for conquering a few other lands around his country. Thereby he could become famous as a hero and an emperor.

But he had a wise and intelligent daughter who did not like wars. She waited for an opportunity to convince her father about the futility of conquests.

The princess grew up to be a beautiful young lady. Many were the young men who desired to marry her. Her fame spread to nearby sultanates.

One day the Caliph told the princess, "My daughter, it is time for you to be wedded to a suitable young man. I will

soon find out one."

"Father!" said the princess, "I must be allowed to choose my husband myself. You may send any candidate to me. But I will marry only him who can answer a question of mine." The indulgent father had no objection to this condition.

Several young men from the nobility came forward to marry the princess. But all excepting one backed out upon hearing the condition. They were not sure about the nature of the question which the princess would set for them. They were afraid of the possible humiliation that would be theirs if they failed to answer.

The one who did not back



out was the son of a sultan.

The young man was ushered into the Caliph's court. The princess sat down facing him. The Caliph and his courtiers waited in eager silence.

"I will tell you a story before putting you my question," said the princess and she went on:

Long ago, there was a certain sultan who desired to become an emperor. With a trained army he marched into the continent of Africa.

Small areas of Africa were ruled by several kings who hardly possessed any army to protect their territories. The sultan subdued them easily, thereby expanding his empire.

But there was one young king who was brave and clever. He did not surrender to the conqueror. Instead, he retreated with his soldiers into the forests and hills and pounced upon the sultan's army when the latter was unprepared.

The obstinate sultan, though much harassed, was not willing to return to his land before he vanquished this particular king. So the battle dragged on for a long time. It was a dry season and the sultan put fire to the forest. The African king's army, unable to bear the heat,



came out to the open.

A fierce battle took place between the two armies. The African army was at last routed and their king killed, but not before a large part of the sultan's army had been destroyed.

After the battlefield had been quiet, the sultan desired to find out the deadbody of the African king. He visited the field over which numerous deadbodies lay scattered. Among them loitered a strange fellow, who seemed to be a forest-dweller.

"Who is that fellow?" the sultan asked one of his African officers.

"My lord! He belongs to a



tribe of cannibals. He is perhaps waiting to eat a corpse," answered the officer.

"Why don't you eat as many corpses as you wish? What are you waiting for?" the sultan asked the cannibal.

"I want only one corpse. But how can I take away someone else's food without his permission? The killer of all these people must be having a terrific appetite," replied the stranger.

The sultan laughed and said, "I have killed them. But not for eating them, do you understand?"

"I don't understand. If you are not going to eat them, why did you kill them?" asked the stranger with great surprise.

The sultan could not give an answer. The cannibal laughed wildly and ran away.

The princess stopped for a

while and asked the young suitor, "Can you say why the cannibal laughed?"

The young man replied, "The cannibal killed human beings only when he was hungry. He was surprised that someone should kill thousands of men with no intention of eating them. He laughed because he concluded that the sultan was mad. He ran away, shunning the contact of the mad fellow!"

"You are right," said the princess.

They were duly married. But needless to say, the princess had another motive in telling the story. Her father now realised the futility of wars and the mass killing of soldiers and innocent people, by listening to the story. He gave up his desire to go out for conquest.





# **YAJNAVALKYA - The exponent of True knowledge**

King Janaka held a conference of the renowned scholars of his country and offered a thousand cows—their horns adorned with gold—to the greatest among them.

However strongly each scholar might have desired to be declared the greatest, nobody could stand before Yajnavalkya. In a brilliant debate, he defeated them all and won the thousand cows.

Great was Yajnavalkya for his knowledge, and he was ever eager to impart true knowledge to others. In this he found the traditional Brahmin pundits often creating obstacles by their rigid adherence to rituals, without any regard for truth. He did not hesitate to raise his voice against such blind scholars. When the Brahmins defended themselves by quoting passages from the Rig-Veda and giving them wrong twists, he asked his disciples to never mind the Rig-Veda itself!

He led the seekers to find a profound truth in a simple manner. Here is an example, from

a dialogue between King Janaka and himself:

“O Yajnavalkya!” asked King Janaka, “What is the light for man?”

“The sun, O King, for, by it man sees, works and returns home,” replied the sage.

“So, indeed, it is, O Yajnavalkya. But when the sun has set, what is the light for man?” asked the king.

“The moon, for, by it man sees, works and returns home,” replied the sage.

“But when the sun has set and the moon has set, what is the light for man?” asked the king.

“Fire, for, by its light man sees, works, and returns home,” replied the sage.

“But when the sun and the moon have set and the fire has gone out, what is then the light for man?” asked the king.

“Speech, for by it man sees, works and returns home. Therefore, O King, when one even cannot see one's own hand clearly, one can follow a voice



which one hears," replied the sage.

"So, indeed, it is, O Yajnavalkya. But when the sun and the moon have set and the fire has gone out and the speech is hushed, what is then the light for man?" asked the king.

"The Soul is the light then, O King," replied the sage.

Yajnavalkya insisted on sincere discipline in spiritual life, and Yoga. It is believed that he was the first sage to popularise the secrets of Yoga.

His self-confidence was often

taken as pride. Once his guru, Vaisampayan, desired to perform a certain kind of penance. He assembled all his disciples and asked them to do the work, on his behalf. Yajnavalkya knew that most of the disciples were unfit for participating in such a holy work. He offered to do everything himself.

This infuriated the guru. "Refund me all the knowledge you have received from me!" he told the disciple angrily.

Yajnavalkya immediately spewed out the knowledge he





had received. The other disciples at once turned into *tittiri* birds (partridges) and ate up the scattered knowledge. The story perhaps is symbolic. As Yajnavalkya spoke out the digest of the lessons he had learnt from his guru, each of the other disciples remembered a small portion of it—equivalent to the food eaten up by the tiny *tittiri*. Later they put their shares together. The text that was born is known as the *Taittiriya Samhita*.

Yajnavalkya then retired into

solitude and devoted himself to invoking the sun god, the source of all knowledge. He did his *tapasya* for long and the sun god was pleased. The god appeared before him in the form of a horse and gave him knowledge far greater than he had learnt from his guru.

The text of his new knowledge is known as the white Yajur-Veda, for, it is clean, while the text of his earlier utterances, the *Taittiriya*, is known as the black Yajur-Veda, for that is rather obscure.







## IN THE COLONY OF FOOLS

Sudhir, in search of some work, one day reached a distant village. There, he was amazed to see a man carrying a lighted lantern in day and another man carrying an umbrella folded although there was a terribly hot sun overhead.

Soon a strange scene attracted his eyes. A young man was beating a buffalo with a stick all the while shouting, "I will go on beating you until you have given birth to a calf!"

The buffalo snapped the rope one end of which was fastened to a pole. As she began to run, the man with the stick followed her, shouting, "I will return you to your old master and recover my hundred rupees!"

The buffalo soon arrived at her old master's house. Sudhir had followed the animal and her pursuer to see the fun.

"Ramu! Come out, I say. I am Chandu speaking. Take back your animal and return my money," shouted the man.

Ramu came out and surveyed the buffalo and said, "This was not mine. On the tail of my buffalo sat a fly. I see none on this one's tail."

"This is bound to be yours. Return my money, I say. You had told me that the buffalo would give birth to a calf last night. But it did not. I have no use of it," shouted Chandu.

Both quarrelled furiously. A number of people from the



neighbourhood collected there. They said "Look here, Ramu and Chandu, how long do you propose to go on quarrelling? Better take a pair of stout sticks and fight."

The two were then provided with sticks. But they had hardly fought when the sticks broke.

"How dare you break the sticks we gave?" shouted the villagers and they gave the two a good thrashing.

"We must go to the judge and complain against these fellows," said Ramu and Chandu. Their clothes were soiled. They changed into better dress and appeared before the judge.

On hearing their complaint, the judge said, "You say that you were beaten by the villagers. But when one is beaten, one's clothes become dirty. I will

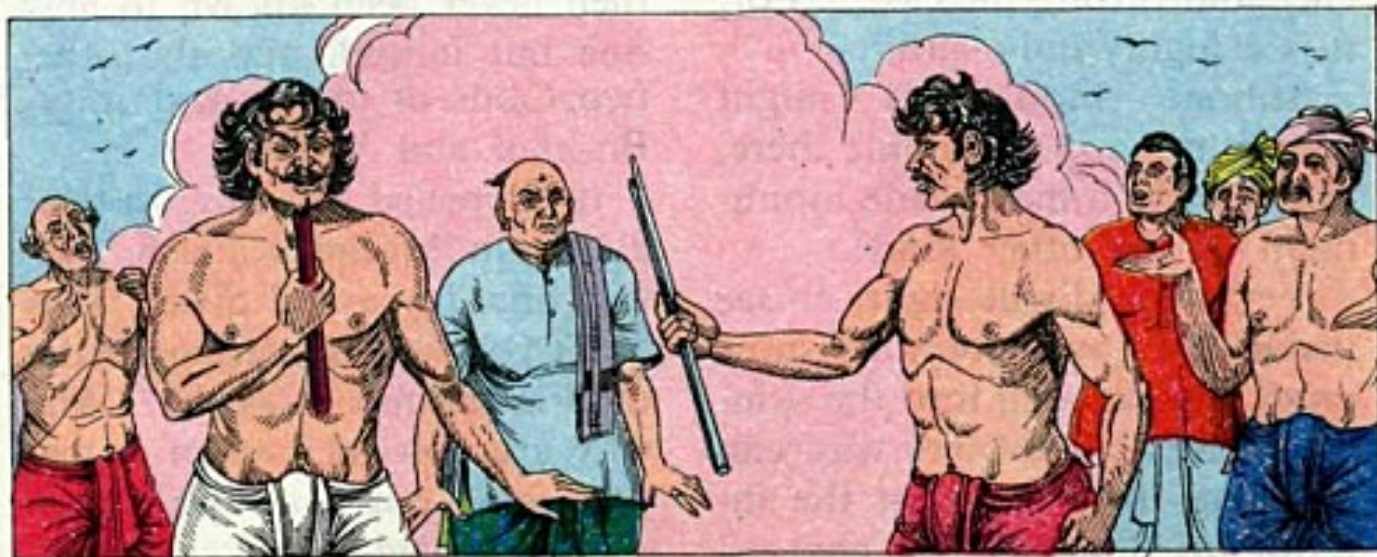
show you how." The judge gave a hint to one of his guards who picked up a stick and made smart use of it on the backs of Ramu and Chandu.

"Now tell me what has truly happened," ordered the judge. But Ramu and Chandu were in no mood to prolong their stay in the court. They ran away.

Sudhir who patiently witnessed everything called the two and said, "You are quarrelling for nothing. If the buffalo has not yet given birth to a calf that is no reason for losing patience"

"Who are you to stop our just quarrel?" shrieked Ramu and Chandu as they raised blows aiming at Sudhir.

Sudhir did not wait to receive the blows. He realised while running that he had visited a colony of fools.







## LEGENDS AND PARABLES OF INDIA

# THE STORY OF THE HOLY CAVE

In the interior of the hills of the beautiful Kashmir there is a cave at a height of four thousand metres. It remains a forbidden spot for almost ten months in a year. It is generally in the month of August that a stream of pilgrims pierce through miles of snow and silence and throng the cave. For, it is a highly holy spot.

Strange though it might sound, there is no temple there, nor is there a man-made monument of any other kind!

Yet it is a divine sight—to see inside the cave luminous snow gradually forming into the symbol of Siva. Devotees who can meditate there say that the interior of the cave is charged

with the presence of Siva.

No wonder that a believer should feel like that, for, the cave had been hallowed by Lord Siva in a remote past. Not only did the great God sit there with his consort, Parvati, but also did he reveal certain mysteries to her which had until then never been known to anyone but himself and the other two Gods of the great Trinity—Brahma and Vishnu.

It happened like this: In their abode in Mount Kailash, Parvati one day asked Siva, “Why don’t you wear something better than a garland of skulls? And why are you so fond of it that you never put it away?”

Siva smiled and kept quiet.



But as Parvati insisted for an answer, he had to reveal that the garland he put on was no ordinary one. It was made of the skulls of Parvati herself! That is to say, Parvati had been born several times as the daughter of the Himalayas and had each time married Siva. When she died, Siva collected her skull and put it in his garland. Thus had he gathered so many skulls—but all belonged to his eternal consort.

Parvati was intrigued. "It is strange that I must die and be born again and again while you remain immortal," she said and desired to know if there was

any secret by listening to which she too could grow immortal.

There was a secret and Siva had no objection to give that out to Parvati. But no one other than Parvati should hear that. Siva looked for a place where neither gods nor men, neither animals nor birds, were present. He at last found a cave and sat down on a rock with Parvati by his side. He then began narrating the lore of immortality. Parvati heard with rapt attention. She would briefly respond when Siva, from time to time, would ask her if things were clear to her.

But when he finished his







narration, he was amazed to find that Parvati had fallen asleep while he was somewhere at the middle of the narration. Who then was responding to his questions? As he wondered, a tiny bird peeped out from the bottom of the rock and flew away. Siva tried to catch it, but in vain. It flew on and entered the mouth of a great

Rishi's wife, far away. In course of time it was to be born as a human being and was to be famous as the sage Shuka. But that is another story.

The holy cave in Kashmir is the same cave where Siva narrated the lore of immortality. It is known by the name of the deity-Amarnath-the Lord of immortality.

### WONDER WITH COLOURS





## THE TWO CONTESTANTS

King Vikram returned to the tree, braving the sharp wind and the intermittent rain. With grim determination he climbed the tree again and brought down the corpse. Throwing the corpse on his shoulder he began crossing the fearful cremation ground while jackals howled and the eerie giggling of the spirits could be heard from all sides.

He had gone a few steps when the vampire which possessed the corpse said, "O King! You are taking all this trouble obviously with some fruit of success in view. I hope, unlike Chandrak, you will not throw away the fruit when you get it at last! Well, let me tell you the story of Chandrak and Rudrak. Your attention will be diverted from your labour and that will give you some relief."

The vampire went on narrating: In days gone by, Satrajit







was the king over the realm of the *yakshas*. He had two young lieutenants, Chandrak and Rudrak. Both served him ably and sincerely.

There was no word difficult enough which the two young men would not undertake to do when asked by their King. Several times the *yakshas* were attacked by demons. But the victory was always Satrajit's. That was due to the valour of these two courageous young men.

The *yaksha* king's only daughter, Tejawati, was extraordinarily beautiful. She developed a fascination for Chandrak who was braver and the more charm-

ing of the two. But Chandrak knew that his dear friend, Rudrak, loved the princess. That is why he did not encourage the princess in making advances towards himself.

Then came a time when the *yaksha* king thought it proper to arrange for Tejawati's marriage. While he was looking for a bridegroom, Rudrak one day confessed to him his love for Tejawati.

The king had great affection for Rudrak. So, he called his daughter and told her that it would be excellent if she married Rudrak.

Tejawati, who was desirous of marrying Chandrak, said, "Father! One who would marry me should pass some test!"

"What test have you in your mind?" queried the king.

"In the adjoining land of the *gundharvas* there is a lake abounding in golden lotuses. One who can drink a drop or two of the lotus squash shall not only be free from all diseases, but also grow immensely charming. Only he who can benefit by such a lotus should be deemed eligible to marry me," said Tejawati.

The *yaksha* king called Chandrak and Rudrak and



asked them to try their luck. The two young men went out in quest of the lake. Chandrak reached there first, before it was evening.

He looked around and saw that it was an enchanting area. There were fragrant flowers in the trees and creepers and the crystal water of the lake was most inviting.

But as soon as he entered the lake for plucking a lotus, he was attacked by a golden lion. Chandrak guessed that what seemed to be a lion was in fact a *gundharva*. He did not panic. Instead, he tried to throttle the lion. Soon the lion changed into a *gundharva* and promised to give Chandrak a lotus if he was spared. And true to his word, he allowed Chandrak to pluck a lotus when Chandrak freed him from his grip.

Chandrak relaxed in a cave near the lake. At midnight he heard a cry which he could recognise to be Rudrak's. He rushed to the lake and found Rudrak lying unconscious on the brink of the water. Chandrak understood that it was the *gundharva* guard of the lake who had attacked him.

Chandrak carried his friend to the cave and crushed the



lotus and put drops of its juice into his mouth. Rudrak recovered his strength in a moment and looked immensely charming.

Both returned to the palace of the *yaksha* king. Looking at them it was not necessary for the king or the princess to ask who had benefited by the golden lotus. It was obvious. Princess Tejwati was duly married to Rudrak.

The vampire stopped here and asked King Vikram, "O King, there is nothing surprising in the princess marrying Rudrak without a murmur for she was a lover of beauty and Rudrak had grown far more



beautiful than Chandrak. But why did Chandrak throw away the fruit of his achievement when both had contested for winning Tejwati's hand? And why did Tejwati, instead of telling her father that she would like to marry Chandrak, set forth a condition for the prospective bridegroom? If you are capable of giving the answers and yet keep quiet, your head will get shattered into pieces!"

Answered King Vikram, "It was Rudrak, not Chandrak, who desired Tejwati's hand. The king in his turn asked Tejwati to marry Rudrak. If the king had asked Tejwati to choose from the two young men, she would certainly have chosen Chandrak. How could she have asked to marry somebody who did not desire her? She initiated the contest for two

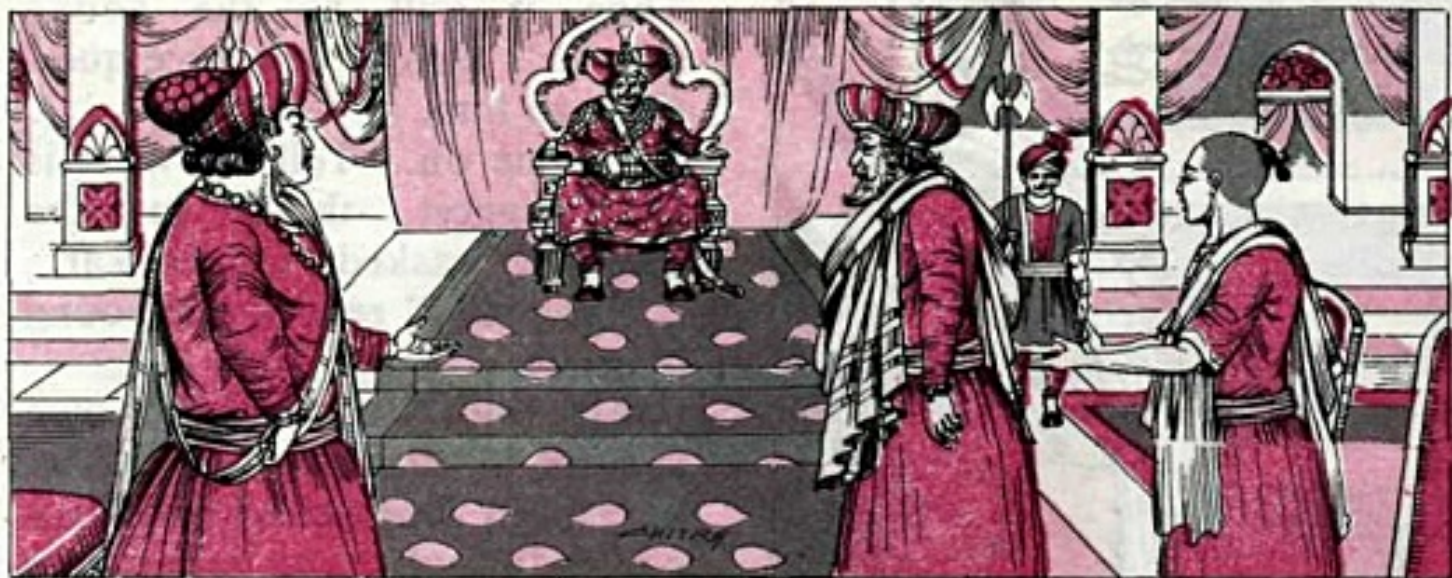
reasons. First, that could inspire in Chandrak the wish to win her; secondly, she was sure that Chandrak will be the one to win the contest! She could not have imagined that Chandrak would foil her scheme.

"Chandrak participated in the contest not to win the princess but to obey the king's order. He had great sympathy for Rudrak. He knew how deeply Rudrak loved Tejwati. It is to help Rudrak achieve his end that he waited in the cave near the lake. It cannot be said that Chandrak threw away the fruit of his achievement. Rather he made the best use of it!"

As soon as King Vikram concluded his answer, the vampire slipped away and, in the flash of lightning, the corpse could be seen dangling from the same old tree.







## THE PUNDIT'S ORDEAL

Harishankar, the great pundit, nursed a fond ambition in his heart. That was to prove himself superior in knowledge and learning to all the scholars of the country. He travelled from kingdom to kingdom challenging the chief scholars of the courts of various kings. He emerged triumphant from every contest.

At last he arrived at the court of the King of Kashi. When he expressed his desire to meet the court pundit in a battle of scholarly wit, the king looked at Acharya Keshari, a renowned pundit.

But said the Acharya, "Wisdom and knowledge are not meant for show. If you are wise or well-versed in the scriptures, that alone should be the

cause of your satisfaction. Defeating others in debates does not mean much. Sometimes a false scholar can defeat a genuine scholar if the latter is shy. Such contests are not a part of our tradition. The great seers and poets of our epics were not known to have entered such contests."

"These are arguments put forth by timid fellows. If you are afraid of facing me, then accept defeat and give me a certificate to that effect," said Harishankar.

In the court was present a young disciple of Acharya Keshari. He whispered to his master, "Kindly allow me to face this man. If I am defeated, I will not feel discredited, for, I am after all only a student."





The Acharya agreed. The young scholar stood up and said, addressing the king, "My lord! I challenge the visitor to argue with me."

"But I will argue only with a well-known scholar," said Harishankar.

"That is the argument of a timid fellow. If you are afraid of facing me, admit your defeat!" answered the young scholar.

Harishankar found himself in an awkward situation. He agreed to a dialogue with the young scholar. It was decided that first he will put three questions to the young scholar.

Then it will be the young scholar's turn to put three questions to him.

"Come on. Tell me what is the biggest thing in the universe!" asked Harishankar.

"The sky," replied the young man.

Although Harishankar's own answer to this question would have been *Brahma*, he could not contradict what the young man said.

He then put his next question, "How can one become great?"

"One must set a great goal for oneself and strive to achieve that," answered the young man.

Although Harishankar's own answer to this question would have been quite different, he could not say that what the young man said was wrong.

"How to see things properly?" was Harishankar's third question.

"If the sunlight is bright and one's eyesight is well enough, one can see everything properly!" was the answer.

Harishankar himself would have given a highly philosophical answer to this question. But what the young man said could not be dismissed as wrong!

"Your answers are too simple,



unlike a scholar's!" commented Harishankar.

"I am young and have little experience. But tell me if I am wrong in my answers," challenged the young scholar.

Harishankar kept quiet. Then came the young scholar's turn to question him.

"Whence do you come?" was the young man's first question.

Harishankar was at a loss to decide what he should say. Philosophically, he has to say, "I do not know!" That will mean defeat. So far as bare fact is concerned, he came from the neighbouring land. Everybody knew that and that was hardly an answer!

"Better you give out the answer yourself," said Harishankar.

"You come from the very source whence come we all!

Now, here is my second question: Where are you going?" asked the young scholar.

Harishankar had the same problem with this question as he had with the first one. He said, "Better you answer this question too!"

"You will give up your desire to emerge triumphant and go back to your own place. Now, here is my third question: What did you bring here and what are you taking from here?" asked the young scholar.

"I can answer this question," said Harishankar, "I brought here much arrogance with myself. I am taking from here the realisation that such dialogues do not really prove that the winner was wiser than the one whom he defeated!"

Harishankar then embraced the young scholar.







# TRAVELS OF MARCO POLO

The young boy who marched forward with his father and uncle looked with wonder at the wide world. What was there beyond the hills? A city of gold or a land of demons? There was no book or magazine to tell them about it. They must see in order to know.

The time was the seventies of the 13th century. The three travellers were Mafeo Polo, Nicolo Polo and Marco Polo. Mafeo and Nicolo, noblemen of Venice, had earlier visited Cathay, the modern China, and were paying a second visit there, this time with the young Marco.

They travelled through Bagdad, Khorassan, the Pamir and the Gobi desert, gathering numerous experiences on the way. Inside the desert, for example, Marco believed that they heard the music of some supernatural beings.

The legendary Kubla Khan was then the ruler of Cathay.

He took an instant liking for Marco and appointed him governor over several states of his empire.

Kubla Khan lived in great pomp and splendour. When he set out for hunting, his throne was placed on the backs of several elephants walking side by side. When anybody of noble stock was to be punished with death, he was killed in a very special way: he was rolled in thick canvas. Two persons held two ends of the roll and went on giving it convulsions till the condemned person died! Marco observed so many such curious customs of the land he served.

Years passed and the Polos were anxious to return home. But the Khan was most reluctant to grant them leave. However, a chance came for the Polos when an old Afghan



**L**O monarch sent his emissary to Kubla Khan requesting for a bride from his family. A young princess, Kakuchin, was selected. But there was war on the land and the bridal party must proceed by sea. Kubla Khan allowed the Polos to go as guides.

After a long voyage, touching Sumatra and Southern India, the party reached its destination, losing most of its members on the way due to an epidemic. But the old bridegroom was already dead by then! His son

married the princess imported from Cathay.

The Polos returned to Venice after 20 years. They had carried with them much gold and precious stones. They lived happily. But in a war that broke out between Venice and Genoa, Marco was taken prisoner by the Genoese. Inside the prison a writer named Rustichillo inspired Marco to narrate his rich story and himself recorded it. Thus was born the *Travels of Marco Polo*—the greatest classic in travelogues.







## THE TWO QUEENS

A certain king had two wives—Malini and Manjari. Both were beautiful and virtuous. But, unfortunately, the two never liked each other. Hardly a day passed when Malini did not complain against Manjari or Manjari against Malini. Their quarrel was the king's greatest worry.

The king had a clever counsellor named Naresh. One day the king told him, "My dear friend! I will be happy if you devote all your time and wisdom to keep peace between the two queens. You won't have to bother about other problems."

Naresh who was jolly and witty by nature, soon proved a great success in his new assign-

ment. He always kept the queens in good humour. The king breathed in peace.

One day an accomplished painter visited the palace. He was famous for drawing the portraits of ladies of the aristocracy. He was duly invited by both the queens to draw their portraits. The painter gave half day to each of the queens and drew their portraits in one day and departed with handsome rewards.

The queens carried their portraits to the king. The king first looked at Manjari's portrait, but he kept it aside quietly. Then he looked at Malini's portrait and exclaimed, "How beautiful!"



Manjari's face paled instantly. "The painter executed Malini's picture first. By the time he came to my apartment he must have grown tired. No wonder that my picture has not turned out well. But does that mean that you must insult me?" said Manjari while weeping. The king tried to pacify her, but she would hear no explanation. She turned and hurried away to her apartment almost wailing.

The king immediately summoned Naresh. Upon his arrival the king sighed and said, "Naresh! You alone can save the situation." Then he narrated to him all that had happened.

"Don't you worry, my lord! I am confident of changing the queen's mood," said Naresh.

"Please do your best," the king pleaded with his counsellor.

Naresh soon appeared before Manjari, carrying with him her portrait. After a polite greeting, he said, "You had left your portrait elsewhere. Please keep it carefully."

"Throw it away! I have no use of it. Who asked you to bring it to me? You don't know how much humiliation I had on account of this portrait! Your king thinks I am not beautiful!" blurted out Queen Manjari.

Naresh showed as if he was





quite surprised. He then said, "I don't understand you, to be frank. When I met the king a little while ago he was all praise for your beauty!"

"That can't be. He just kept aside my portrait and praised Malini's. This happened only an hour ago!" said the queen.

Naresh gave out a hearty laugh and then explained, "Well, in that case, the one who should feel sad is Queen Malini, not you! The king did not appreciate your portrait because you are so beautiful that with the best of his efforts the artist has failed to portray you properly on the canvas. On the other hand Queen Malini's portrait looks more beautiful than herself! How can those who have seen you personally be ever satisfied with your portrait?"

Queen Manjari's eyes glittered with joy. She immediately

took out a precious necklace and offered it to Naresh, saying, "You have spoken the truth. Please accept this gift."

"Pardon me, O Queen! Let me not carry the necklace home, for, I too have two wives, each more jealous than the other. Thank you, anyway," said Naresh as he turned to go.

But the queen immediately took out another necklace and said, "Have two then!"

Naresh bowed to the queen and departed, delighted to have the pair of necklaces. He went to king straight. The king still sat pensive. "Rejoice, my lord," said Naresh, "Queen Manjari is happy; I am happier!"

"How?" asked the king. Naresh narrated how he achieved the goal. The king gave him a third gold chain—for himself.







## **The World of Magic**

# **WHAT IS IN COLOUR?**

Bhupesh, the king of Ratnapur, was a good man and a nice ruler. His queen, Indumati, was an excellent match for him. But the royal couple was childless. Over the years they performed several religious rites to appease the gods and to have a child by their blessings. But the prayers seemed to go unheard.

Once a mendicant paid a visit to the court. He found the king looking gloomy. Answering the mendicant's question the king said that he was sad because he had no heir. The mendicant meditated for a while and then said, "In your previous life you were the cause of the death of all the children of an innocent man. That is why

you are destined to go childless in this life. But your destiny may change if you do a certain penance in the Himalayas."

The king was most willing to do as suggested by the mendicant. He entrusted the queen with the burden of ruling the land and followed the mendicant to the Himalayas.

The king remained engrossed in an unbroken penance for two years, braving the heat of the sun and the whip of the storm. At the end of the period the mendicant told him, "You can now return to your palace, carrying with you this bow and this bunch of arrows. On your way you will come across a forest. You will find in it a number of boars, some dark,



some brown and some fair. Shoot down one of them and carry its flesh to your queen. Let her eat it. You will soon be blessed with a child."

The king took leave of the mendicant and proceeded towards his kingdom. Soon he entered a dense forest and saw it infested with wild boars. In a hurry he shot his arrow at a dark-skinned boar and killed it and carried with him a bit of its flesh.

There was great rejoicing in the kingdom as the king returned. The queen was duly fed with the flesh the king brought. In due course she

gave birth to a child—but the child was dark-skinned.

Both the king and the queen were quite fair in their complexion. So were most of their subjects. Although the queen did not mind the colour of the child, the king was very much unhappy with it. He had so much prejudice against the dark skin that he said again and again, "My two years of severe penance should have yielded better result!" The queen tried her best to console him, but he continued to be unhappy.

The ministers were worried about the king's mood. But they did not know what to do





One day Somnath, the court magician, told them, "If you allow me, I can try to bring about a change in the king's outlook by my magic!"

"Please try, you have our sanction," said the ministers.

Once every week the king, the queen, and the courtiers were entertained to a show of magic, dance, songs and gymnastics. When the next occasion for the show came Somnath was seen with a small metal pipe in his hand, bowing to the audience. He fixed the pipe to a stand and then brought out a white ball from his pocket.

"What is the colour of this

ball?" he asked the audience.

"White," replied the king.

Somnath pushed the ball into the perpendicular pipe. When pushed further by his magic wand it came out through the bottom of the pipe—still looking white. But when he pushed the same ball again through the pipe, it emerged black!

There was applause. Somnath bowed. Then he placed the black ball at the top of the pipe again and pushed it down with his magic wand. It came out white! There was applause again.

"My lord! This only shows that there is hardly any dif-





ference between black and white. Because the difference matters so little, white can turn black and black can turn white in no time! There is nothing glorious in white; nothing inglorious in black. One who is wise should not see one colour as superior to the other."

The show had a tremendous impact on the king's attitude towards his child. By and by he got over his old prejudice altogether and loved his child as a father should.

"But how on earth could a white ball change into a black one and the black one into a white one?" Somnath's wife asked him.

Somnath showed her the pipe and three balls, two white and one black. The size of the balls was such that they would remain stuck into the pipe unless given

a little push. "I had already placed a white ball and over it a black ball in the pipe before the show began. First I pushed a white ball through the pipe. The one that came out was the other white ball although the audience got the impression that it was the same ball pushed into the pipe before their eyes. When I next pushed the white ball into the pipe, what came out was the black one and the people thought that the white had turned black! Then I pushed the black ball into the pipe and a white ball emerged and it was taken that the black had turned white!"

"So simple!" observed Somnath's wife.

"Simple when you know the trick. But amazing when you don't!" said Somnath.

—By A. C. Sorcer, Magician







The Vanaras had grown so panicky that when Vibhisana approached them they took him as Meghnad and fled. But Jambavan shouted at them assuring them that they had nothing to fear.

Vibhisana was extremely sad to see Rama and Lakshmana lying in a helpless condition. He gave up the hope of capturing the throne of Lanka.

But Sugriva embraced Vibhisana and said, "Do not think that victory has already gone to Ravana. Rama and Lakshmana have just swooned away. When they regain their consciousness, they will no doubt vanquish Ravana and get you the crown of Lanka."

Sugriva then told Sushena, his uncle, "After Rama and Lakshmana regain consciousness, you can return to Lanka with a batch of such Vanaras who seem demoralised. With the rest, I will continue fighting till Sita Devi is rescued."

Said Sushena, "I know of the battle that took place between the gods and the demons long ago. The demons, by virtue of their supernatural magic and black art had succeeded in making several of the gods unconscious even then. However, Brihaspati, the guru of the gods, revived the gods by applying his elixir. The herbs from which the elixir could be prepared are to be found on hills across the





Ocean of Milk. I think it will be wise to send Hanuman to fetch those herbs without any delay."

While they talked, a roaring sound was heard and a luminous being was seen coming towards them through the sky. Animals shrieked and birds tittered at the approach of the being who was no other than the mighty Garuda.

And as soon as Garuda began descending beside Rama and Lakshmana, the arrows which kept them pinned to the ground turned snakes. Then the snakes dispersed in a great hurry.

Garuda touched the wounds of Rama and Lakshmana and at once they were healed. The

two brothers sat up. Garuda greeted them and embraced them.

Rama said, looking at Garuda, "We have regained our lost strength with your rejuvenating touch. Seeing you I feel the delight the like of which I used to feel only when I saw my father, King Dasharatha, or grandfather, King Aja. You charm me with your demeanour and dress. Who are you?"

"O Ramachandra! I am your friend and servant – one who is dear to you. Garuda is my name. I rushed here to secure your release from this dangerous gin of arrows which were in fact snakes. No wonder that the snakes would flee at my sight. Otherwise it would not have been easy to free you from them. In this battle with the demons you should be always on your guard. The demons can take recourse to any trick to achieve their end."

Garuda, then preparing to take leave of Rama, said, "Please do not think about me any more at the moment. When the battle is over, you will remember me of your own and know our relationship. Let me assure you of your victory. Ravana is destined to die. You



will recover Sita Devi and return to Ayodhya in triumph."

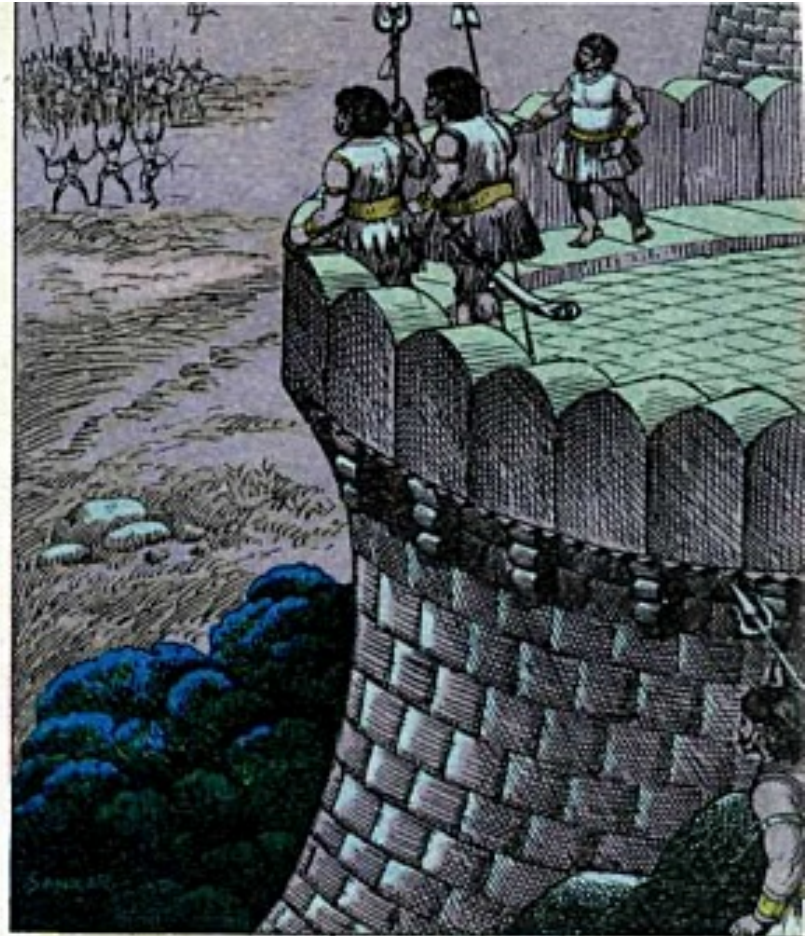
Garuda then greeted and embraced Rama and Lakshmana again and rose and disappeared through the clouds.

When the Vanaras saw that Rama and Lakshmana had completely recovered, they could scarcely contain their happiness. They sang out their joy to the accompaniment of bugles and drums. It was midnight. They lost no time in surrounding the fort of Lanka.

Ravana was surprised to hear the sounds made by the Vanaras. He summoned his ministers and said, "How is it that the Vanaras are so happy? Aren't they expected to weep at the death of Rama and Lakshmana?" He despatched some of his trusted observers to see what the matter was.

The observers were amazed to see from the top of a tower that the Vanaras were planning to seize the fort, Rama and Lakshmana directing their movements as before! They hurried back to Ravana and reported their finding.

Ravana was very unhappy to learn that Rama and Lakshmana had survived the snake-arrows of Meghnad. He asked



a demon-hero named Dhumraksha to go and put an end to the invaders of Lanka.

Dhumraksha asked the captains to provide him with a battalion of able soldiers. When his demand was met, he went out to confront the enemy through the western gate, equipped with choice weapons.

The Vanaras rushed upon the demons. The carefully forged weapons of the demons proved no better than the trees and rocks which the Vanaras used. In fact, the demons were in the defensive and many of them were found retreating.

Dhumraksha mustered all his strength and in an abrupt clever





move killed a good number of Vanaras.

Hanuman was observing the tricks employed by Dhumraksha. When he saw some of his soldiers cornered by the clever demon, he uprooted a huge stone and hurled it at Dhumraksha's chariot. Dhumraksha jumped down just in time before the stone smashed the chariot and his horses.

Dhumraksha was protected by able demons who surrounded him. Hanuman had to cut his way through them to stand face to face with their leader. Dhumraksha attacked him with a hard mace. But that hardly gave him a scratch. Hanuman

then uprooted another rock and brought it down on Dhumraksha, killing him instantly. The demons gave out cries of horror and fled into the fort. The Vanaras raised their voice and sang the glory of Hanuman.

Ravana felt upset at the news of Dhumraksha's death. He called upon Vajradramsta, another demon hero, and told him, "Go and destroy the enemy. I have great trust in you."

Vajradramsta was an expert in magic. He armed himself with a large bow and powerful arrows and pounced upon the Vanaras through the southern gate. He was accompanied by several able lieutenants.

He confronted Angada who stood alert outside the southern gate. In the fight that followed, a good number of soldiers from both the camps gave their lives. As the soldiers surrounding the two chief antagonists fell, Vajradramsta and Angada came closer to each other. Vajradramsta's chariot was damaged by Angada. Like his predecessor in the battlefield, Vajradramsta too attacked Angada with a mace. But Angada evaded the blows. After a long time Vajradramsta was tired. With a lightning move



of his sword, Angada beheaded him.

Vanaras shouted out their joy. The noise reached Ravana's ears. He understood that Vajradramsta was dead. He clenched his fists and ordered another tried hero, Akampana by name, to proceed to the battlefield. He was given a large army and a strong chariot.

The battle that ensued was more fearful than ever. The Vanara heroes like Kumud, Nala, Maind and Dwividh were jointly active and as a result a large number of demons died. Akampana suddenly charged at this company of heroes and attacked them. Such was his valour and the knowledge of warfare that the Vanara-heroes seemed to be losing ground before him.

Hanuman could see the menace that was Akampana. He rushed at him raising a rock. But Akampana's arrows smashed the rock before it could hit him. Hanuman at once uprooted a tall tree and gave a great blow to the demon with it. Akampana fell down and breathed his last. His soldiers left their weapons in the battlefield and fled into the fort.

The Vanaras jumped singing



the praise of Hanuman. Their jolly hullabaloo was heard by the demons with a shiver of terror.

The news of Akampana's death stunned Ravana. He went out for a survey of his army. Battalions of demons were well-arrayed on the vast ground along the wall of the fort. Ravana encouraged them and returned to his court and told his commander-in-chief, Prahasta, "I am afraid, the situation is too serious to be tackled by anybody except myself, yourself, Kumbakarna, Meghnad or Nikumbha. Choose your own battalion and proceed to face the enemy."





Said Prahasta, "I have nothing new to say. I still believe that it would have been wiser on our part to surrender Sita Devi to Ramachandra. However, I am ready to obey your order whatever it is, even if that costs me my life."

Prashasta thereafter called his closest assistants and asked them to mobilise an army of excellent soldiers to follow him. While he kept busy choosing his arms, holy rites were performed praying for his victory.

Prahasta himself blew the bugle to inspire his soldiers. His four lieutenants, Narantaka, Kumbhahana, Mahanada and Samunnata stood by his side.

As Prahasta appeared in the battlefield, Rama asked Vibhisana, "Who is this demon who seems so bold?"

"He happens to be the chief commander of Ravana. He is no doubt an unusually bold demon and he knows the use of a variety of weapons," answered Vibhisana.

*Contd.*

It is impossible to defeat an ignorant man in argument.

*William G Mcadoo*

A belief is not merely an idea the mind possesses; it is an idea that possesses the mind.

*Robert Bolton*

Growing old is no more than a bad habit which a busy man has no time to form.

*Andre Maurois*





## THE MAGIC BAG

A century ago there lived a man named Chang La in a village in China. His father was an expert craftsman who prepared excellent caps. They had a shop which attracted customers from a wide area. They became quite rich.

When Chang La's father died, he lost all interest in his work. It was because his father had left much property for him. However, he did not close down the shop. In China it was believed that every trade had a god behind it. Chang La was afraid that if he closed down the shop the god of his trade will be angry with him. So he continued to make caps and sell them, but he made them carelessly and sold them at high price. As days passed, he naturally lost customers.

A year later another cap-

maker named Bang La came to that village. He had excellent caps, bags and pouches to sell at a reasonable rate. At the request of the villagers he opened a shop in front of Chang La's. All the customers of Chang La now bought their requirements from the new shop.

One day, while Chang La looked on, a mendicant came to Bang La and gave him a piece of golden deer-skin and asked him to make a bag out of it.

As soon as the mendicant departed Bang La sat down to work. By evening he had made a fine bag which he hung against his wall.

From the next day Chang La could see a marked change in Bang La's conduct. Whenever Bang La saw a needy man, he gave him a coin or two. From his customers he charged half of



the usual price for the caps and bags.

Chang La grew curious. Once when Bang La kept the doors of his shop shut, Chang La peeped through a hole into his shop. What he saw was amazing. Bang La shook the deer-skin bag and out of it fell a handful of gold coins!

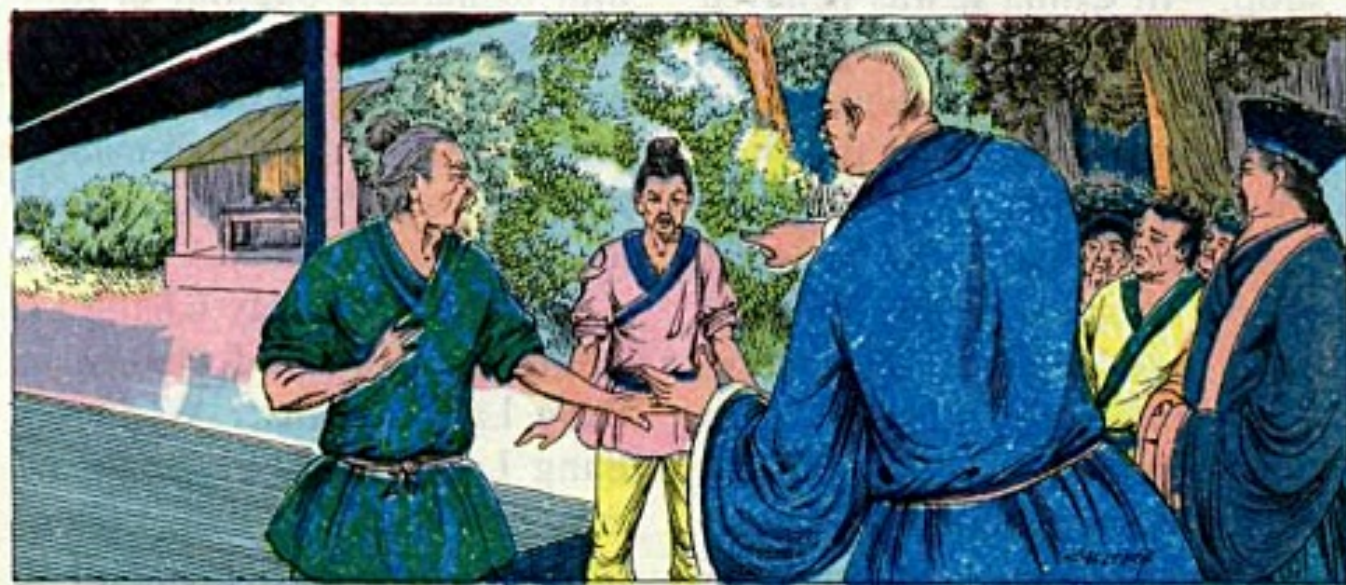
Chang La decided to steal away the magic bag. He kept a vigilant eye on Bang La's shop. Next day Bang La, keeping his shop open, entered his inner room to fetch an instrument. Instantly Chang La entered his shop and removed the magic bag hanging another bag in its place.

Delighted, Chang La proceeded to his home and closed the doors and shook the bag. But, instead of any gold coins falling from it, all the gold he

had in his house disappeared!

Chang La did not know what to do. After an hour he thought that it would be wise to restore the bag to Bang La. He went to meet Bang La. He saw there a crowd discussing the theft of the bag from Bang La's shop. When Chang La arrived there, the mendicant from whose deer-skin the bag had been prepared stepped out and said, "Chang La! You need not return the bag. You have no faith in your own trade. This bag will be henceforth your only means of livelihood."

The mendicant then went away. His words proved true, for, Chang La had to live by begging and he used the same bag for receiving alms. People said that the mendicant was none other than the god of the trade.







## CLEVERER OF THE TWO

Damodar always accused his wife Lakshmi of being lazy. No doubt, Lakshmi had the habit of falling asleep whenever she got a chance. But to her husband's accusation she replied, "If I can do all the household chores promptly, what harm is there if I sleep away the time I save? Do I waste time by gossiping with the neighbouring women?"

But Damodar was never satisfied with Lakshmi's answer. "Even if you were half as active and alert as myself, we could prosper much faster than all the other villagers," he often observed.

Once the need arose for them to buy a buffalo. They had

accumulated five hundred rupees in cash. A few miles away from the village there was held a weekly fair where good buffaloes were available. Damodar proposed to proceed there a day ahead of the fair so that he could buy the very best buffalo available, before any other buyer could come to bargain for it.

"Two hundred and fifty rupees should be enough to buy a buffalo. So, I do not wish to carry with me all the cash we have. But my fear is, if I leave half of it at home, you will lose it to some cheat or thief, foolish and lazy that you are!" said Damodar.

"Then carry the entire cash



with you," proposed Lakshmi.

"I should. But it is not safe to carry about a lot of money while wandering among strangers. I will carry only half. But see that the other half is safe," warned Damodar.

A burglar was listening to their conversation. It was almost evening when Damodar left his home. As soon as it was a little more dark the burglar made a soft knock on the door. By then Lakshmi was already on her bed. The burglar repeated the knock several times. As there was no response from inside, he concluded that Lakshmi, being lazy, had

fallen asleep.

The burglar then busied himself in digging a hole through a wall of the house. He was quite accomplished in the art. When the hole was big enough for him to enter through it, he slowly pushed his head in.

Bang! A heavy blow fell on his head. He swooned away. Lakshmi dragged him in and hauled him into a room and locked the door. Needless to say, she was awake right from the time when the burglar knocked on the door. When the burglar began digging the hole, she had rightly guessed from the sound what was going





on. The room had a false roof for storing things. She sat on it, a strong stick ready in her hand.

When it was morning she called the villagers and handed over the burglar to them. She was praised by all.

Damodar spent the night in an inn near the fair. He remained alert and passed a careful eye on each buffalo that arrived there for sale: At last, towards the noon, he found a very healthy and young buffalo and was eager to buy it.

"What is the price you expect for this?" he asked the seller.

"Three hundred rupees," was

the reply.

Damodar offered to buy it for two hundred rupees. Then he went up to two hundred and fifty. But the seller told him sternly, "I will not part with the animal for a paisa less than three hundred rupees."

Damodar, disappointed, went round looking at other buffaloes in the market. But others were inferior to the one he was bargaining for.

He blamed himself for not bringing with him some more money. As he was brooding over the issue, an old man approached him and said, "I observe that you have grown





particularly fond of that buffalo. That one belonged to me. But as I owed some money to that fellow which I could not pay, I had to surrender it to him. However, I will feel happy if you buy it. I know you will take proper care of it, for, you like it."

"But how can I buy it? The fellow refuses to accept a paisa less than three hundred rupees while I cannot pay a paisa more than two hundred and fifty rupees!" grumbled Damodar.

The stranger seemed to remain thoughtful for a moment. Then he said, "All right. You give me whatever you have. I will push the amount into his hand and plead with him to go satisfied with that."

Hopefully, Damodar handed over his money to the stranger. The man went in the direction

of the buffalo, but was soon lost in the crowd. Damodar waited expecting the man to return with the buffalo. But when an hour passed and the stranger was not to be seen, he approached the buffalo-seller and enquired about the old man. Only then he realised that he had been swindled of his money. The seller knew no old man of the description Damodar gave! Damodar roamed about almost till the last man left the fair hoping to spy upon the old man, but in vain.

When he reached his home, he heard the adventure Lakshmi had with the burglar. He mumbled, "Lakshmi may be lazy, but she is clever. I may not be lazy, but I am a fool!"

No more did Damodar boast before his wife of his own alertness.







# The Instrument of Judgement

King Shatanan was very particular about punishing criminals in exact proportion to the gravity of their crimes. No one guilty of a crime should go unpunished; no one who was innocent should be punished by mistake—was his motto.

The king was always enthusiastic about new inventions. Scientists and inventors were amply rewarded by him.

In his kingdom lived an inventor named Raghu Nath. One day he met the king and said, "My lord, with years of efforts, I have prepared an instrument which will make the task of judging the criminals extremely easy."

The king became curious to

see the instrument. Raghu Nath opened a small box and brought out a handy instrument.

"My lord! You can see that the dial of this instrument is marked with numbers from 1 to 10. If this is kept close to one's chest and he speaks, the needle's point will not go beyond the mark 4. But if someone speaks a lie, the needle will cross 4."

"That is wonderful!" exclaimed the king and looked at the minister for his opinion.

"My lord! The feeling of guilt remains in one's mind. This instrument can record only the reaction in a person's body. How can its reading be taken as correct?" observed the





minister.

"The wise minister should know that a person's mental condition was bound to be reflected on his body, through certain subtle vibrations," said the inventor.

"Maybe. Even then we should not depend entirely on an instrument for judging a man," replied the minister.

But the king was quite taken up by the new invention. He hung it on his own chest and uttered a lie. The needle immediately shot up to 7. Then the minister put it on and did the same. The needle showed 5.

"See, my lord. For the same

lie the needle showed 7 in your case. But in my case it shows 5. What guarantee is there that in someone else's case it will not show a different number?" asked the minister.

"But don't you see that in both the cases the needle passed the mark 4?" demanded the inventor, annoyed with the minister.

"Do not be upset, Raghnath," said the king, "I have developed a great faith in your instrument. We will use this henceforth in determining whether an accused person was guilty or innocent!"

The inventor received a handsome reward. From that day whenever somebody accused of a crime was brought before the king, he tried him by the help of the instrument.

A few months passed. One day a murder was committed in broad daylight on the king's highway. The man killed was a wealthy landlord. His murderer was captured red-handed by the people who witnessed the ghastly scene. He was duly handed over to the police. But he struggled to escape till he was produced before the king.

"I am not guilty of any crime, my lord!" he shouted in the



darbar. The king made him put on the instrument and asked, "Tell me now, are you not guilty?"

"No!" answered the accused. And the needle of the instrument did not even cross the mark 1.

"Leave him. He is innocent," said the king.

"Wait a moment, my lord," said the minister and then he asked the accused, "Tell me, have you not killed the landlord?"

"I have!" answered the accused.

The king looked bewildered. "He spoke a lie when I asked

him whether he was guilty or not. How did the instrument fail to show it?" he murmured.

The minister questioned the accused and found out that he killed the landlord because the landlord had, for certain enmity, poisoned his wife and son to death. The accused had only avenged the death of his wife and son.

"My lord!" said the minister, "The accused does not believe that he was guilty of any crime. So, his answer to your question was not a lie and hence the instrument did not cross the number 4. But he has committed the murder and the law







must take its own course. If you had released him depending on what the instrument showed, you would have done so under a wrong impression. Now, if you are willing to pardon him knowing the facts,

that is a different matter."

The king pardoned the man, but from that time onward he never depended on the instrument alone for deciding whether an accused was guilty of a crime or not.

## SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES





### THE ELEPHANTA CAVES

At a distance of six miles from the harbour of Bombay is an island which was previously known as Gharapur. Today it is popularly called Elephanta, after a rock-hewn elephant, which was transferred to Bombay's Victoria Gardens in 1864.

Upon a hill on the island, 250 feet above the sea level, is situated a magnificent temple. The famous statue of Trimurti (God with three faces representing the aspects of Creator, Preserver and Destroyer) is to be found here too. The statue is 20 feet high and carved out of a single rock.

A number of beautiful caves here, rich with 1,000-year old Brahmanical sculptures, are among the most graceful artistic creations of man.







## TO CUT THE GORDIAN KNOT

It was a normal morning for Gordius, a peasant of Phrygia. He walked towards his field, as usual, driving a wagon.

But an oracle had told the leading citizens of Phrygia that they should crown as their king the first man they saw that morning in front of the temple of Zeus, in a wagon. The citizens saw Gordius just when he arrived before the temple.

The peasant was led to occupy the throne!

Gordius dedicated his old wagon to the temple. He fastened his wagon to one of the temple poles in such an artful manner that nobody could un-

fasten it.

In course of time a legend grew to the effect that whoever should unfasten that knot would conquer Asia. Alexander, while on his march into Asia, approached the Phrygian temple and cut the knot with a stroke of his sword. Although he did not unfasten it, the knot in any case was undone and his soldiers took it as a sign of the hero's right to rule over Asia!

Hence the *Gordian Knot* (the knot of Gordius) means an intricate problem, and *to cut the Gordian Knot* means to overcome such a problem in a daring way or by a sudden inspiration.







**Dear sir, we all love to read fairy tales. But do fairies really exist?**

*Radhika Ranjan Das,*

*Sri Aurobindo International Centre of Education, Pondicherry.*

"When the first baby laughed for the first time, the laugh broke into a thousand pieces and they all went skipping about, and that was the beginning of fairies," wrote James Mathew Barrie in his **Peter Pan**. Further he wrote, "Every time a child says 'I don't believe in fairies', there is a little fairy some where that falls down dead."

What the author meant is, there is a world of dreams and fancy which exercises great influence on us. If we believe in the beings of that world, they exist for us. If we do not believe, they do not exist.

This is true. But do fairies exist independent of our belief or disbelief? This has been a subject of controversy for centuries. There are many who claim to have seen the fairies. Among them there are people whose testimonies cannot be lightly dismissed.

The most sensational evidence about the existence of fairies came in 1917, from two English girls, Elsie (16) and Frances (9). Near their small village, Cottingley, was a wood in which the girls when together, could see fairies and play with them. But nobody knew about their strange experience until they photographed the fairies and the news reached Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the celebrated creator of Sherlock Holmes. Sir Conan Doyle collected the pictures and had them examined by several experts of his time most of whom said that they were genuine. Few who said that such pictures could, in principle, be fake, failed to see how the two girls could have done the highly sophisticated trick.

The controversy, long forgotten, was revived in 1971 when BBC interviewed Elsie and Frances.

*Readers are welcome to send such queries on cultural, literature or general knowledge which should be of interest to others too, for brief answers from the Chandamama.*



## CHOOSE A TITLE AND WIN A REWARD

*You are invited to choose a title for the following story and write it down on a post card and mail it to 'Story-title Contest' Chandamama, 2 & 3 Arcot Road, Madras 600 026, to reach us by the 20th of January. A reward of Rs. 25.00 will go to the best entry, which will be published in the March issue. Please do not use the same card for entering the photo-caption contest.*



In a certain village lived a nobleman who, one evening, shot down a crane and gave it to his cook for roasting it for him.

The cook roasted it so well that he himself could not resist his temptation to eat up a small portion of it. That was the reason why one of the two legs of the bird was missing when he placed it before his master.

"What happened to the other leg?" asked the nobleman.

"Other leg? Sir, the crane possesses only one leg!" replied the cook.

"What!" blurted out his master, "Come with me and let us see!"

The nobleman then dragged his cook to the bank of a lake where plenty of cranes were to be found. But the cranes stood on one leg each, folding up the other leg, as they do when asleep.

"Look, master, the crane has only one leg!" said the cook happily. But the nobleman clapped his hands and at once the cranes stretched out their hidden legs.

"Now?" demanded the master.

"Sir, why didn't you clap your hands before eating the roasted bird? You would have seen the other leg!" replied the cook.

(Adapted from Boccaccio)



# PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Ravindra S. Kamboj



Mr. A. L. Syed.

- These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 31st JANUARY
- Winning captions will be announced in MARCH issue.
- Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to :

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST  
CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE  
MADRAS-600 026

## Result of Photo Caption Contest held in November issue

The prize is awarded to :

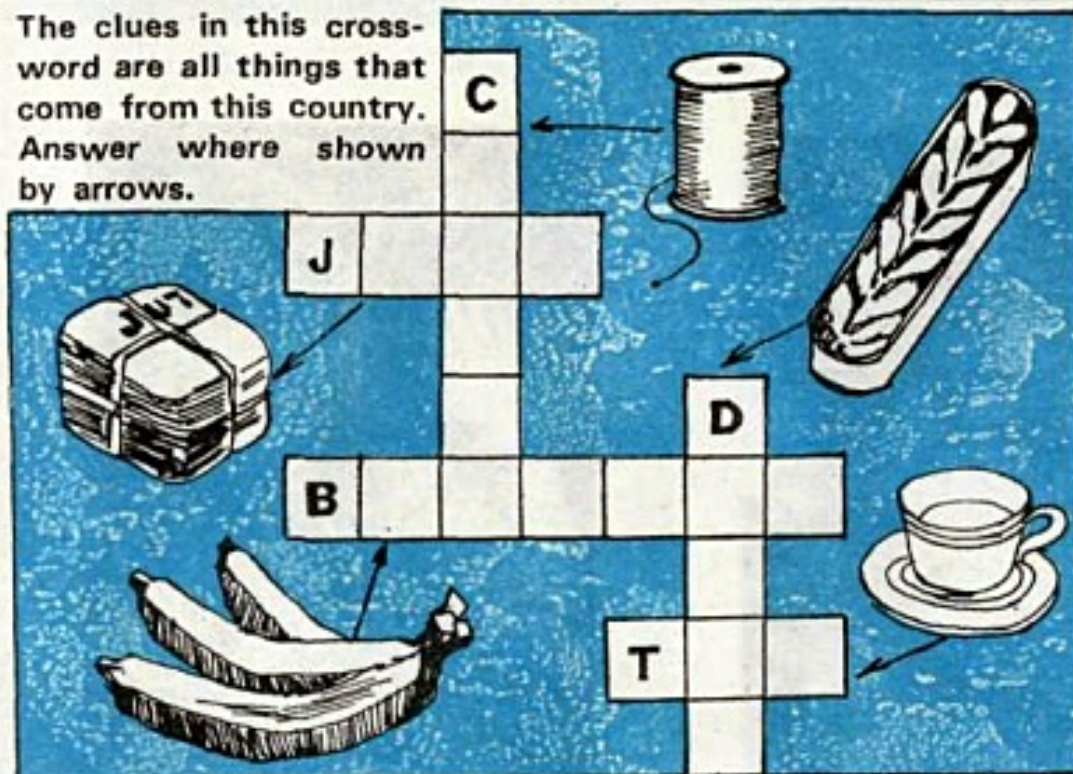
Mr. B Mahadava Baliga,  
'Sadhana',  
604-3rd Cross,  
Hanumanthnagar,  
Bangalore-9.

Winning Entry — 'Ship that Glides' — 'Light that Guides'

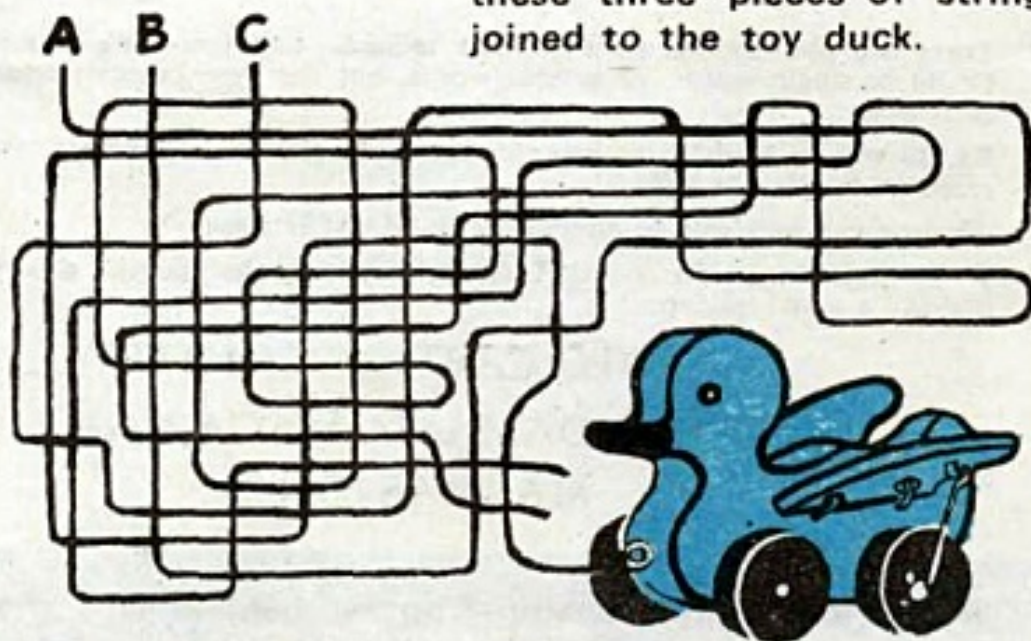


# PUZZLE TIME

The clues in this crossword are all things that come from this country. Answer where shown by arrows.



See if you can guess which of these three pieces of string is joined to the toy duck.



ANSWERS  
DOWN: Cotton, Dates  
ACROSS: Jute, Bananas, Tea.  
String "A"



**Milk**

*flows into*

**Asoka**

**Glucose**  
*Milk*  
**BISCUITS**



BREEZE-AB/9/76



**ASOKA BISCUIT WORKS Hyderabad.)**



**NATION ON THE MOVE**

# Rapid rise in exports

India's total exports have gone up to over Rs. 3,300 crores. Ten years ago, it was only Rs. 805 crores.

Quality control has helped to build a better image of Indian goods abroad. Engineering goods earned Rs. 353 crores last year through exports—a new record.

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